

Conceptualizing Taiwanese Cultural Values in Souvenir Packaging Design for Foreign Tourists: How Japanese Tourists Purchasing for Casual Gift-Giving

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of Taiwanese souvenir packaging design on Japanese tourist purchases with a perspective of how cultural values perceived by Japanese tourists in Taiwanese packaging design. Taiwan has long been one of the most popular tourist destinations among Japanese tourists. The target audience of the research is the millennial generations of Japanese tourists who prioritize travels in their lives. As for Taiwanese souvenirs, a pineapple cake is selected in order to explore the preference of package designs for Japanese tourists.

The research is developed following two sections along with the objectives.

1) Examining Japanese tourists' preferences on Taiwanese souvenir packaging design for gift-giving by using eye-tracking and interviews.

The result of eye-tracking revealed that Japanese tourists pay attention to typography and graphic design among other packaging design elements. The interviews during the experiment also revealed that Japanese would change the choices of souvenir packaging design depending on whom to give a souvenir.

Keywords: Souvenir Packaging Design, Gift-Giving, Purchasing Behavior, Cross-Cultural Studies

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INTRODUCTION

Taiwan has long been a popular tourist destination for Japanese tourists. Japanese tourists are one of the important groups of tourists for the tourism industry in Taiwan. According to the data from the Tourism Statistic Database of Taiwan Tourism Bureau (2023), the number of Japanese tourists has been increasing drastically after the travel restrictions between Taiwan and Japan were lifted in October, 2022. The number of Japanese tourists in February in 2023 almost reached 45,000 (Table 1). Considering the potential increase of Japanese tourists, it remarkably explains how attractive Taiwan is for Japanese people as a tourist destination.

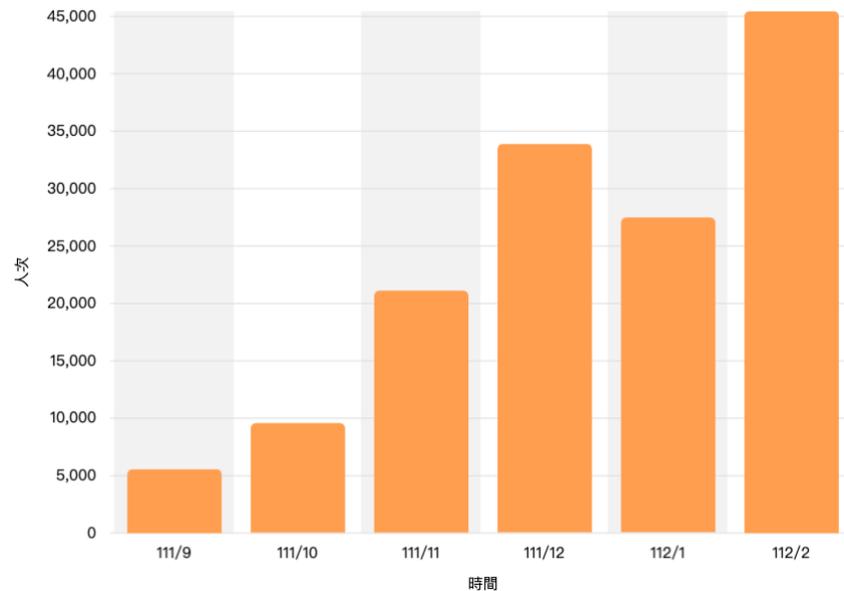


Table 1: The number of Japanese tourists has been increasing after the travel restriction was lifted in October 2022.

Source: Tourism Statistic Database of Taiwan Tourism Bureau (2023)

Taiwanese food culture

Taiwanese food culture has become increasingly noticeable in Japan during the pandemic. The cause of the result was predicted that in order to satisfy the desire to travel to other countries, Japanese people tend to eat more international cuisines, such as Asian and ethnic food. Taiwanese food, in particular, can be considered as one of the examples of this trend. There are several TV shows or variety of social media featured Taiwanese food during the pandemic (TBS News, 2021; 日テレ News, 2021).



Figure 1: Video captures of Taiwanese food-related topics on Japanese TV news.
Source: TBS News(2021) & 日テレ News(2021) [accessed: December 11, 2022]

Packaging Design

Packaging design is the first element of visual information that consumers perceive. Since it is not possible to see the inside of a product, the packaging design is an important element to attract consumers. Products and their packaging designs become so intertwined in the eyes of consumers that they are no longer regarded as separate elements; therefore, packaging design has a direct impact on the purchasing decision. As for the design elements of packaging, it discusses not only the visuals but also includes other materials, such as typography, color, imagery (including illustrations, photographs, symbols, graphic devices, and icons), size, form, and structures. (Klimchuk & Krasovec, 2012) Particularly for Japanese people, the survey revealed that 53.1% of Japanese tourists also prefer to select food and non-food souvenirs with the local identity logo on the packaging (General Research Inc, 2018). Therefore, packaging design is one of the important elements for Japanese tourists to decide the souvenir purchasing.

Ranking of the characteristics and qualities people look for when purchasing gifts for others. - Food souvenir-		Ranking of the characteristics and qualities people look for when purchasing gifts for others. - non-food souvenir -	
他人へのお土産に求めるポイント ～食べ物編～		他人へのお土産に求めるポイント ～もの編～	
1	ご当地ロゴ 53.1% Local identity logo	1	ご当地ロゴ 52.9% Local identity logo
2	限定品・コラボ商品 20.1% Limited item & Collaboration products	2	限定品・コラボ商品 17.7% Limited item & Collaboration products
3	賞味期限の長さ 14.6% Longer best-before data	3	日用品 13.8% Daily necessities.
4位	詰め合わせ 7.0%	4位	消耗品 9.8%
5位	商品の紹介文がある 5.2%	5位	商品の紹介文がある 3.7%
		6位	飾り物・置物 2.1%

※ご当地ロゴ (●●県産・商品自体にご当地性が伺えるもの)、限定品・コラボ商品 (「限定品」という言葉が商品の一部に表記)
商品紹介 (商品の特徴やおすすめポイントの表記)

Table 2: Around 50 % of Japanese prefer to choose souvenirs with a logo of local identity.
(Translated by the researcher) Source: General Research Inc (2018)

By understanding these discussions, this research aims to explore attractive Taiwanese food souvenirs packaging design for Japanese tourists, and develop the design guideline of Taiwanese souvenir packaging design in order to contribute to the designers for a future use.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Two methodologies are applied for two studies as below.

	Research Objectives	Research Methodologies
RO1	Explore Japanese tourists' preferences on Taiwanese souvenir packaging design.	Eye-tracking

Eye-tracking

Eye tracking is a quantitative method to collect the data of eye movements of people as they watch a visual stimulus. Eye tracking mainly can visualize three eye movements; where on the objects the participant focused, how long the participant stares at a specific area, and which elements of the objects the participant views first. (Cullipher, Hansen & VandenPlas, 2018) Eye tracking has been widely used for research in a variety of fields, such as consumer research, user experience or even health care. Packaging research is also suitable to use eye tracking to understand where the consumer pays attention to. (Tobii, 2022).

As for a representative of Taiwanese food souvenirs, pineapple cake was selected for an experiment. Taiwan is known as “the kingdom of fruits (水果王國)” and Pineapple is one of the most popular fruits among Taiwanese fruits. This is a reason why pineapple cake plays an important role to represent the Taiwanese souvenir for both local Taiwanese and tourists visiting Taiwan. (Taiwan Pineapple Museum, 2017; 中央通訊社, 2019) According to the ranking of pineapple cake in 2023 (良品工研所, 2023), nine brands of pineapple packaging design are chosen for the experiment. nine photos of outer box packages and nine photos of individual packages were prepared. Due to the limitation of the device portability, five Japanese short-term exchange students who came to Taiwan for the first time were selected as participants.



Figures 2: 18 photos of packaging design of pineapple cake. Source: 良品工研所 (2023)

Each participant watched 18 photos of packaging designs for pineapple cakes individually, with each photo displayed for a duration of seven seconds. Subsequently, participants were required to respond to four questions related to their preferences in the packaging design. The

following four questions were prepared and participants were instructed to provide their answers using a scale ranging from one to seven.

- 1) Do you like this package?
- 2) Do you want to eat this pineapple cake?
- 3) Do you want to buy this as a gift?
- 4) Do you feel this package is very “Taiwanese” ?

CONCLUSION

The results of Eye-tracking experiment

According to the result of eye-tracking, below three packages are most liked by the participants. Among all the outer box packaging designs, (a) is the most like packaging design, it received the highest scores in both the most liked design and the one that attempts the participants to consume the pineapple cake. In terms of purchasing for gifts, (b) is the most favored packaging design among the other designs. For individual packaging designs, (c) received the highest overall score across all four questions.



Figure 3: Most liked packaging design among 18 photos of pineapple cake packaging design. Researched by the researcher.

Consequently, an eye-tracking analysis was conducted on these three packages to gain insights into the specific packaging elements that captured participants' attention during the experiments. The resulting heatmaps of the packaging design and the cumulative duration of fixations within Areas of Interest (AOIs) are obtained as below. According to the data of package (a), approximately 35% of the total time allocated to looking at the packages was devoted to observing the graphic of pineapples on the packaging. In the case of package (b), participants also spent 24% of total time on paying attention to the pineapple graphics on the package, while 23% of the time was observing the product name. Similarly, for package (c), participants had a greater focus on the graphic design of pineapples and the product name compared to other packaging design elements. With these results, graphic images and typography are the elements that Japanese tourists paid attention to the most.

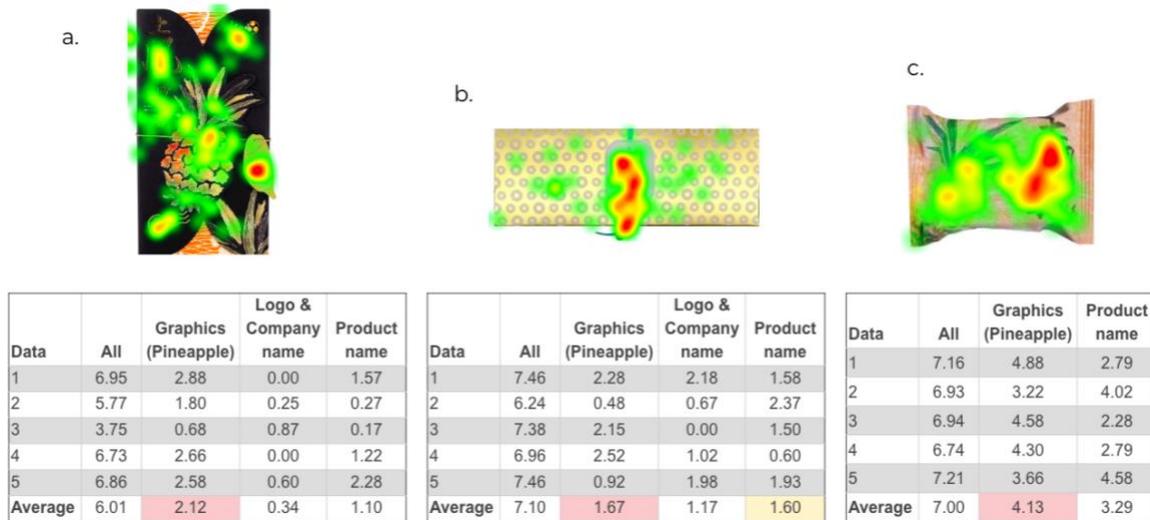


Figure 4: Heatmaps of packages and the total duration of fixation in Areas of Interest (AOIs). Researched by the researcher.

Findings

Based on the findings from the eye-tracking analysis, it is evident that graphics and typography play a significant role in packaging design, as the great attention was given to these elements by Japanese participants. However, feedback from two participants following the experiments highlighted the potential variability of preferred packaging design scores may be different depending on the intended recipient of the souvenir. Since the present study did not specify the receivers of the souvenirs, future research needs to clarify the target recipients for Japanese tourists, as well as to explore the variations in purchasing behavior based on the different recipients.

Furthermore, an interesting observation from the study is the frequent use of the term "Kawaii" by participants to explain their choices in packaging design. While "Kawaii" is commonly translated as "cute" in English, it seems that it has a wider range of meanings beyond mere cuteness. Therefore, it would be highly valuable for future studies to delve into the perception of "Kawaii" among Japanese tourists and examine how it influences their purchasing behavior when it comes to gift-giving.

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